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Shiva Parvati

Amar Chitra Katha: the Glorious Heritage of India



Shiva Parvati

The Puranas are full of legends about the victories of Shiva over the forces of evil. As Rudra or Bhairava, he is the destroyer of evil. As Shankara or Shiva "the auspicious" – he restores that which is destroyed. He is also the ideal Mahayogi, a great ascetic, engaged in meditation.

According to Puranic legends, Sati, the daughter of Daksha, is his consort. Daksha however, does not hold his ascetic son-in-law in high esteem. Daksha performs a Mahayajna, to which he invites all except Shiva. Sati finds it difficult to bear the insult meted out to her lord. And when Daksha deliberately slights Shiva, unable to bear the humiliation, Sati enters the sacred fire. She is reborn as Parvati, daughter of Himavat.

Kumara Sambhava of Kalidasa,on which this illustrated classic is based, narrates the enduring love of Parvati for Shiva and her efforts at winning over her beloved by penances and austerities. To this day, the abiding love of Parvati for Shiva is the theme of many a folk song in Indian languages.

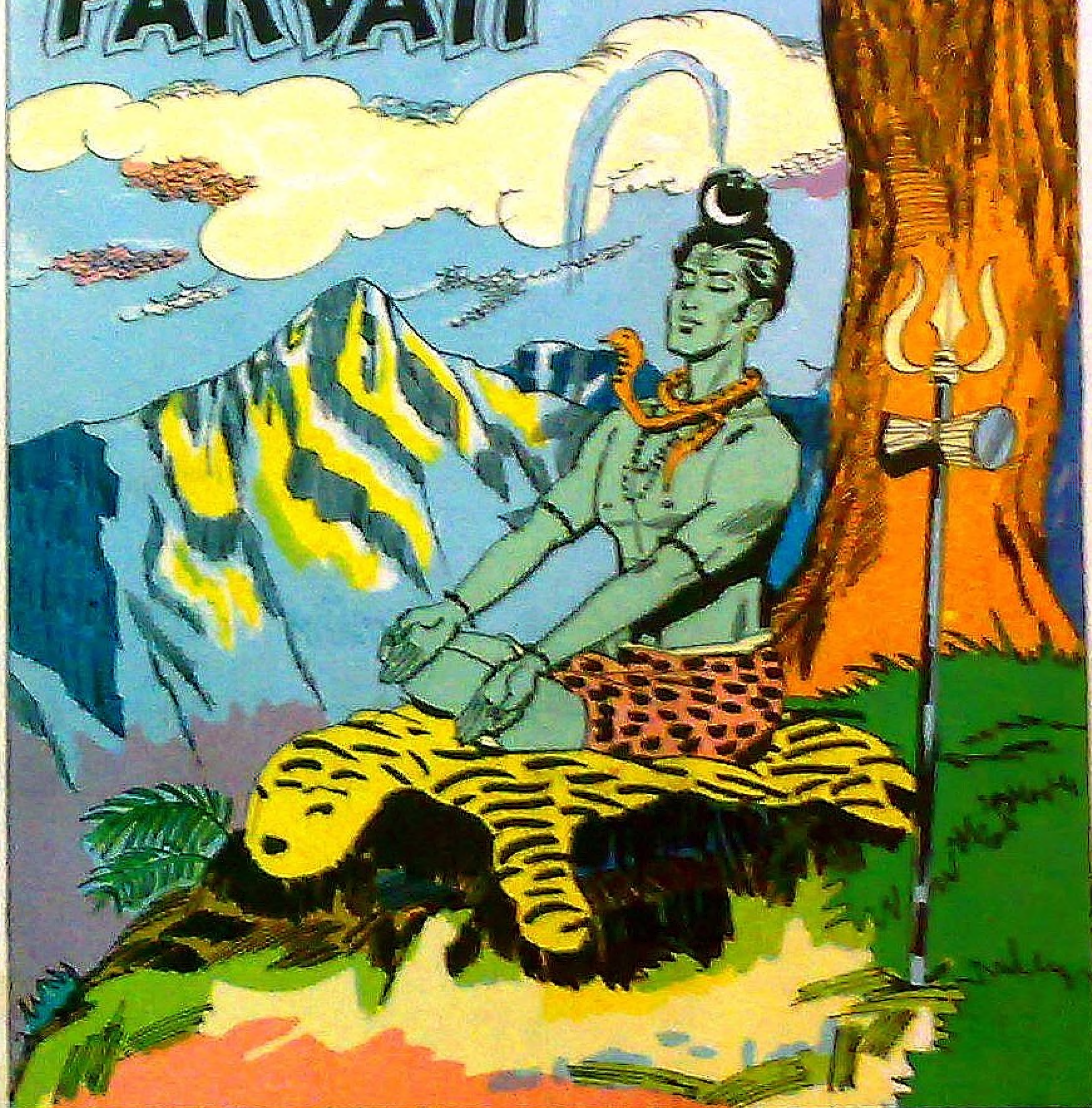


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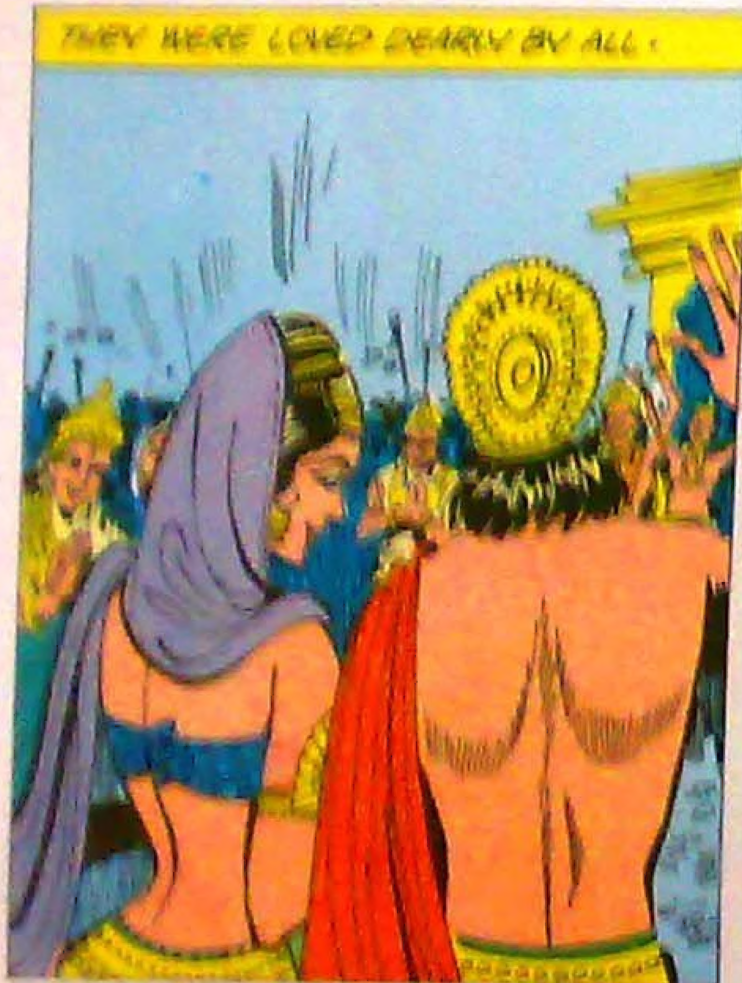
SHIVA PARVATI



SHIVA'S FATHER-IN-LAW, DAKSHA, FOR SOME REASON DISLIKED HIM AND NEVER LOST AN OPPORTUNITY TO INSULT HIM. SATI, SHIVA'S WIFE, ASHAMED OF BEING THE DAUGHTER OF SUCH A FATHER, GAVE UP HER BODY. AFTER SATI'S DEATH, SHIVA WENT BACK TO HIS MEDITATION ON THE HIMALAYAS.

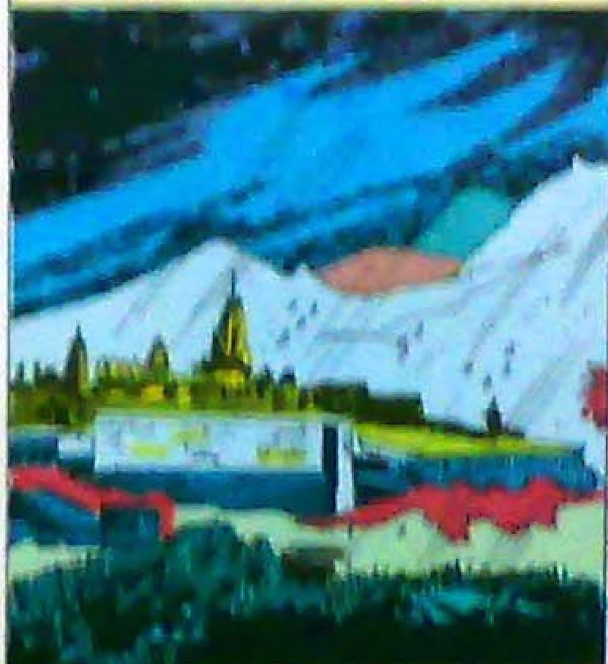

VERY NEAR THE GROVE WHERE SHIVA MEDITATED, LIVED THE GREAT MOUNTAIN KING, HIMAVAT.

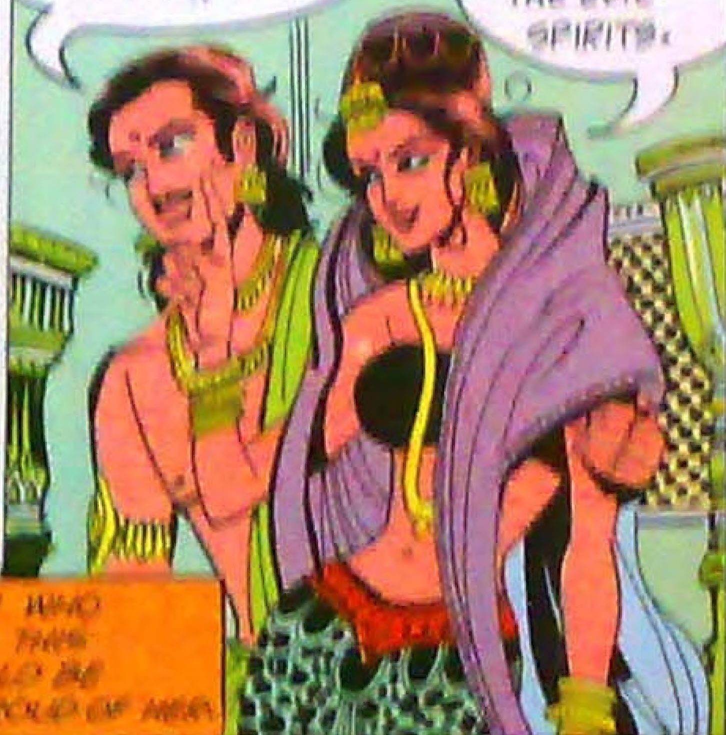

HE HAD MARRIED THE HEAVENLY NYMPH MENAKA.


THEY WERE LOVED DEARLY BY ALL.


ONE DAY –
MENAKA HAS HAD A BABY GIRL! A LOVELY CHILD!
LET US CALL HER PARVATI.

NATURE TOO REJOICED AT PARVATI'S BIRTH.



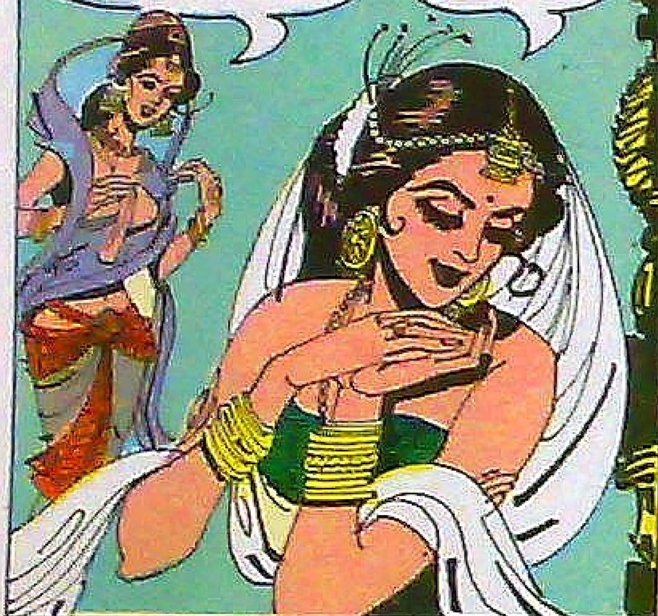


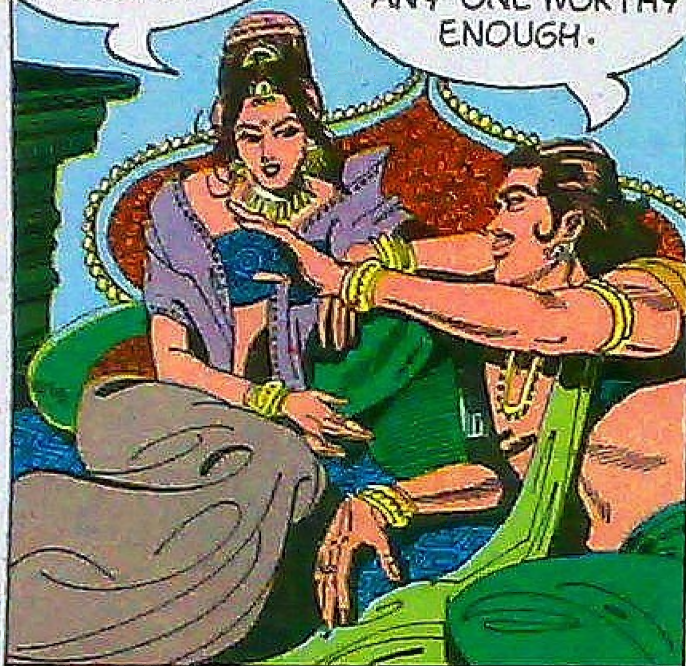
PARVATI WAS REALLY SATI WHO HAD BEEN REBORN, BUT THIS TIME TO A FATHER SHE COULD BE PROUD OF AND WHO WAS PROUD OF HER.

SHE WAS AS LIVELY AS SHE WAS LOVELY AND HAD MANY FRIENDS.





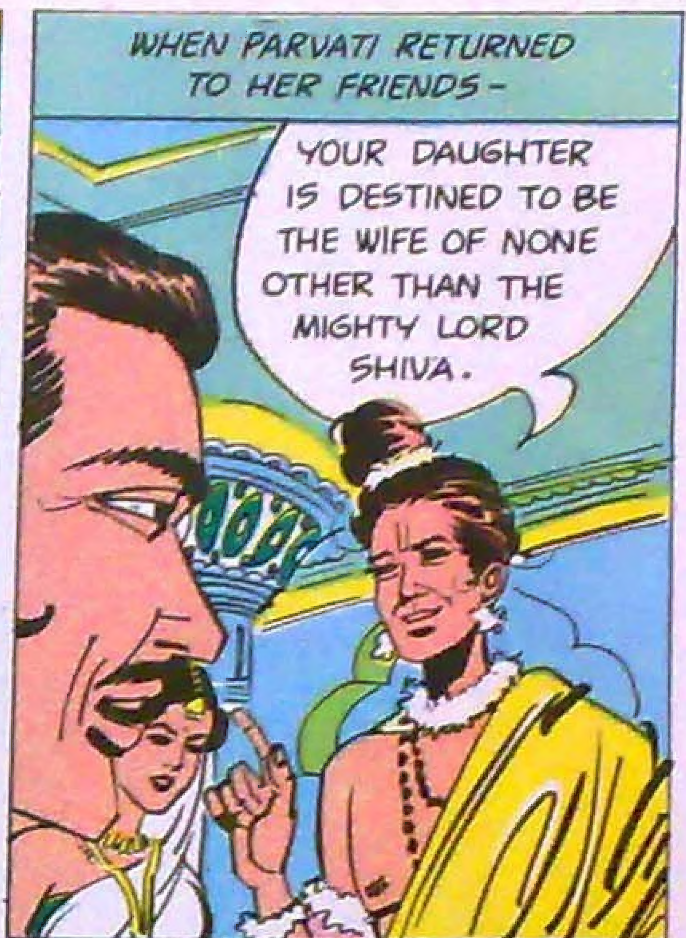

THE YEARS FLEW BY AND PARVATI GREW UP TO BE A BEAUTIFUL MAIDEN.
PARVATI, MY CHILD, IT IS TIME YOU WERE MARRIED!
MOTHER!


THAT NIGHT —
IT IS HIGH TIME WE FOUND A HUSBAND FOR PARVATI.
I KNOW. BUT I CANNOT THINK OF ANY ONE WORTHY ENOUGH.


HIMAVAT DOTED ON HIS DAUGHTER. ONLY THE BEST WAS GOOD ENOUGH FOR HER.
I WILL GIVE MY PEERLESS CHILD TO ONE WORTHY OF HER IN EVERY RESPECT.


ONE DAY THE SAGE NARADA VISITED HIMAVAT.
NARAYANA! NARAYANA!
PARVATI! COME HERE.
COMING, FATHER.



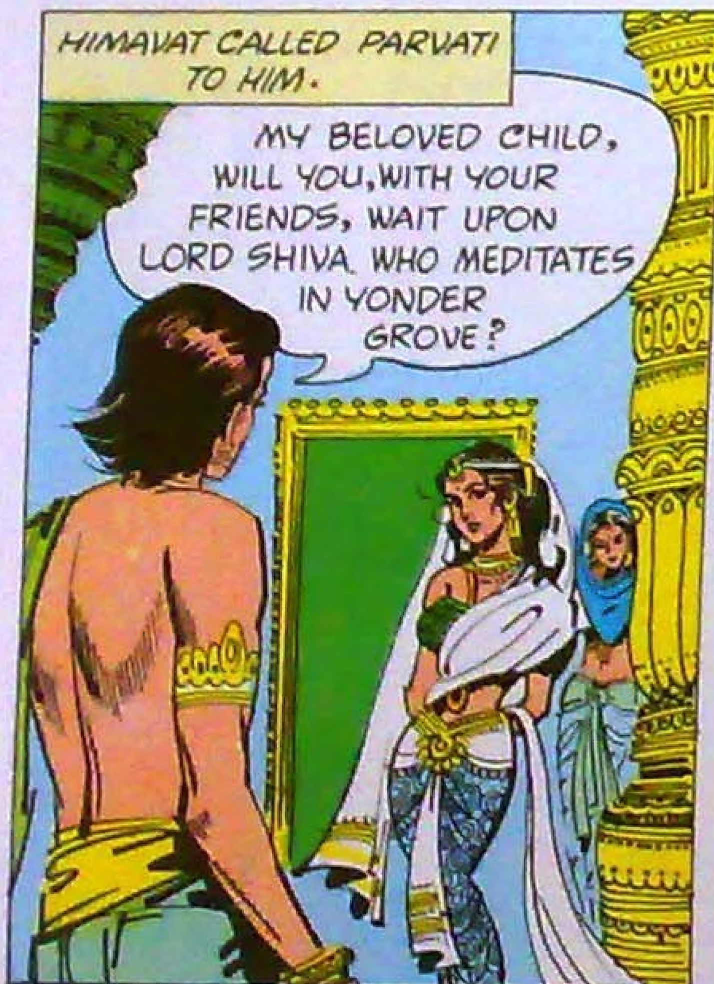

WHEN PARVATI RETURNED TO HER FRIENDS -
YOUR DAUGHTER IS DESTINED TO BE THE WIFE OF NONE OTHER THAN THE MIGHTY LORD SHIVA.


HOW CAN I APPROACH SHIVA? SUPPOSING HE REFUSES ME? HE HAS NOT LOOKED UPON A WOMAN SINCE SATI GAVE UP HER BODY...


...AND YET I DO NOT WISH TO SEEK FURTHER. NARADA'S PROPHECIES ALWAYS COME TRUE. I'LL WAIT AND SEE.


SO HIMAVAT WAITED. BUT ONE FINE DAY -
I HAVE WAITED LONG ENOUGH, AND SHIVA CONTINUES TO BE LOST IN MEDITATION.


SUDDENLY AN IDEA STRUCK HIM. HE WENT TO MENAKA.
I WILL SEND PARVATI TO WAIT UPON SHIVA. HE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO RESIST HER CHARMS.
AN EXCELLENT IDEA!


HIMAVAT CALLED PARVATI TO HIM.
MY BELOVED CHILD, WILL YOU, WITH YOUR FRIENDS, WAIT UPON LORD SHIVA WHO MEDITATES IN YONDER GROVE?

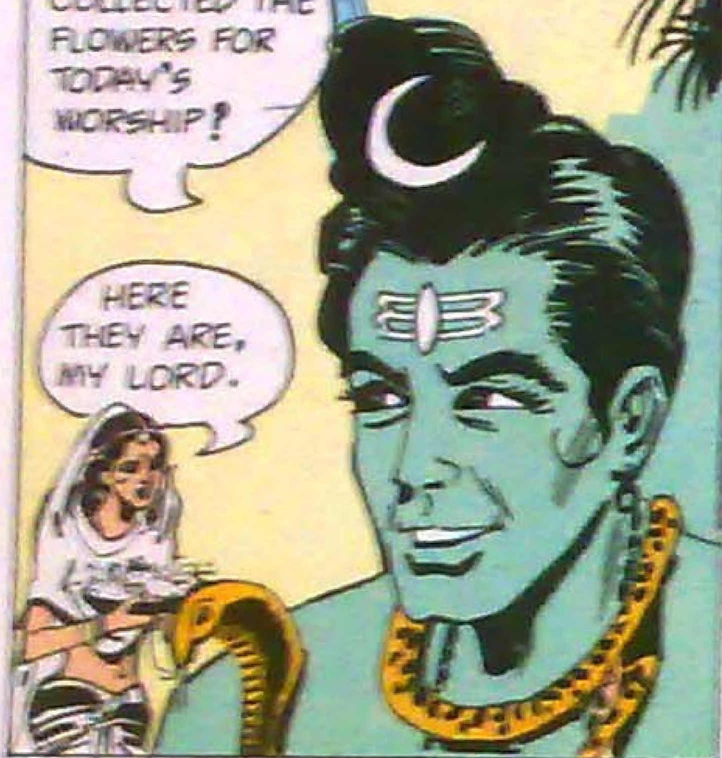

WE HAVE OFTEN SEEN HIM, FATHER. WE SHALL GO.


HIMAVAT TOOK PARVATI AND TWO OF HER FRIENDS AND WENT UP TO SHIVA.
LORD, YOU HAVE NONE TO HELP YOU FOR YOUR RITUALS. MY DAUGHTER CAN.


SHIVA LOOKED AT THEM CALMLY FOR A FEW SECONDS.
LET THE GIRLS SERVE ME. THEY ARE NO HINDRANCE TO ONE WHO HAS RENOUNCED THE WORLD.


THEN HE ADDRESSED HIMAVAT.
I AM GRATEFUL TO YOU FOR YOUR THOUGHTFUL GESTURE. LET THE MAIDS SERVE ME AS THEY WILL.


HIMAVAT WAS JUBILANT AS HE LEFT THE MAIDS AND WENT.
NARADA'S PROPHECY WILL COME TRUE VERY SHORTLY. I AM ASSURED OF PARVATI'S FUTURE.


PARVATI BEGAN TO ATTEND ON SHIVA.
PARVATI, HAVE YOU COLLECTED THE FLOWERS FOR TODAY'S WORSHIP?
HERE THEY ARE, MY LORD.


PARVATI, COME ON. LET US FEED THE DEER.
A MOMENT. LET ME FINISH CLEANING THE LORD'S PRAYER SEAT.


SHE CAREFULLY CHOSE THE "KUSA" GRASS FOR HIS RITES...
COME FARTHER! THE BEST GRASS GROWS THERE.
OH! PARVATI, WE ARE TIRED.

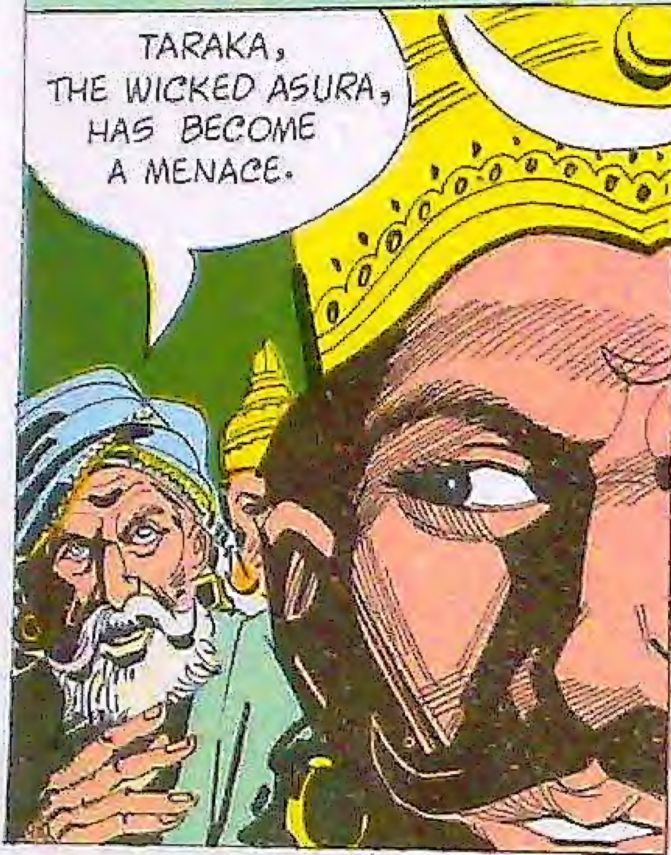

... AND FANNED HIM GENTLY WHEN THE DAY GREW WARM.

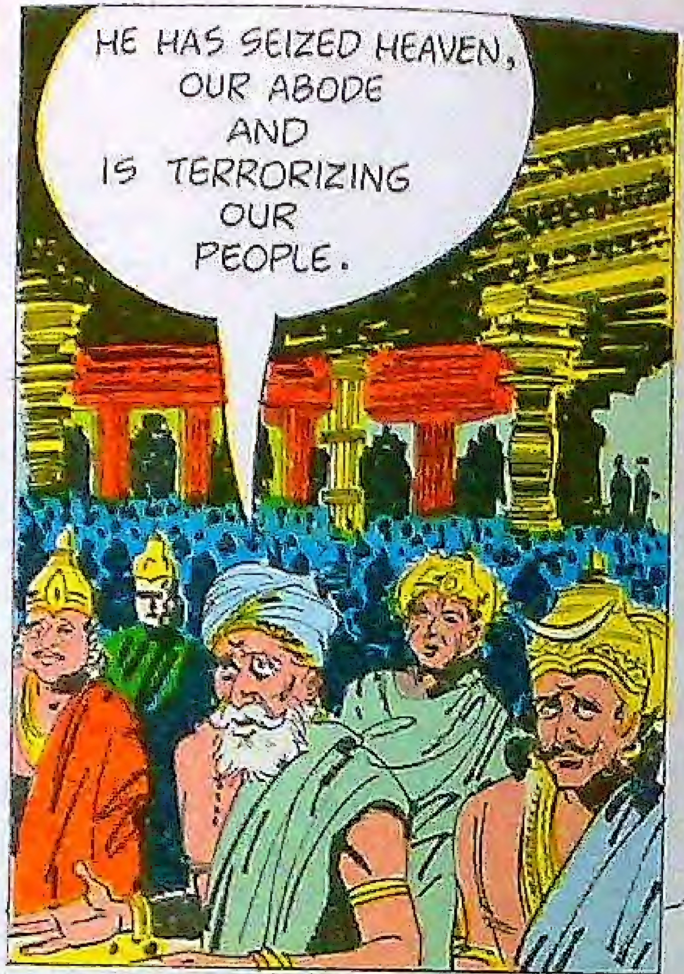




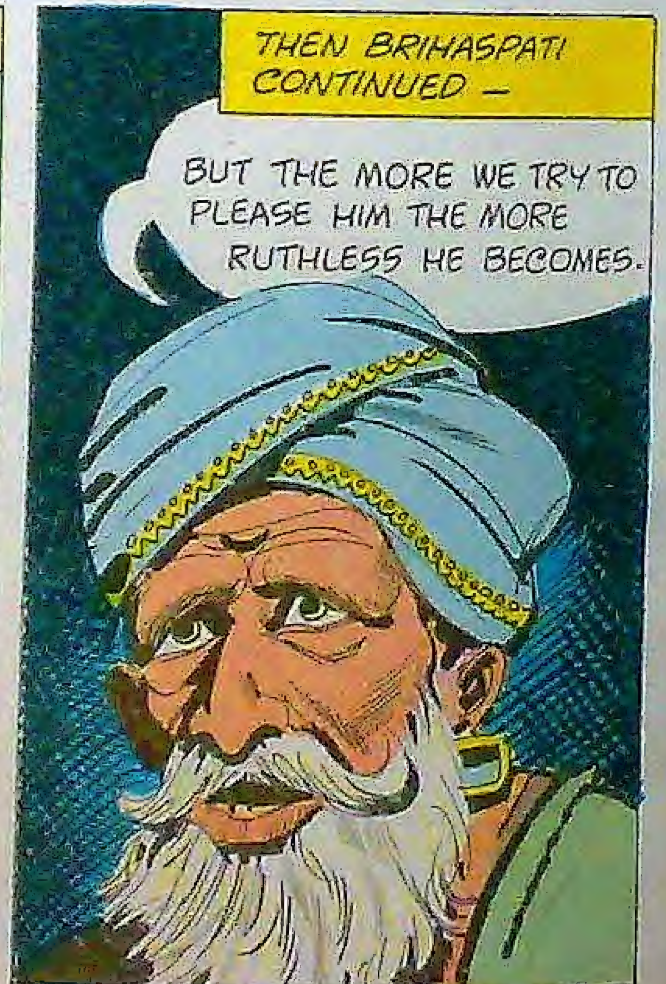
MEANWHILE THERE WAS TROUBLE IN HEAVEN. THE GODS LED BY INDRA CAME TO BRAHMA.

WELCOME, MY SONS. BUT WHY DO YOU LOOK SO SAD AND GLOOMY?


INDRA SIGNALLED TO BRIHASPATI, THEIR CHIEF PRIEST, TO SPEAK.
TARAKA, THE WICKED ASURA, HAS BECOME A MENACE.


HE HAS SEIZED HEAVEN, OUR ABODE AND IS TERRORIZING OUR PEOPLE.


INDRA STEPPED FORWARD —
I EVEN SEND HIM GIFTS TO FLATTER HIM AND WIN HIS GOODWILL.


THEN BRIHASPATI CONTINUED —
BUT THE MORE WE TRY TO PLEASE HIM THE MORE RUTHLESS HE BECOMES.


"HE HAS LAID WASTE ALL OUR BEAUTIFUL GARDENS AND OUR CAPTIVE WOMENFOLK TEARFULLY FAN HIM WHILE HE SLEEPS."


WE HAVE COME TO ASK YOU TO GIVE US A CHIEF WHO WILL LEAD US AGAINST HIM.

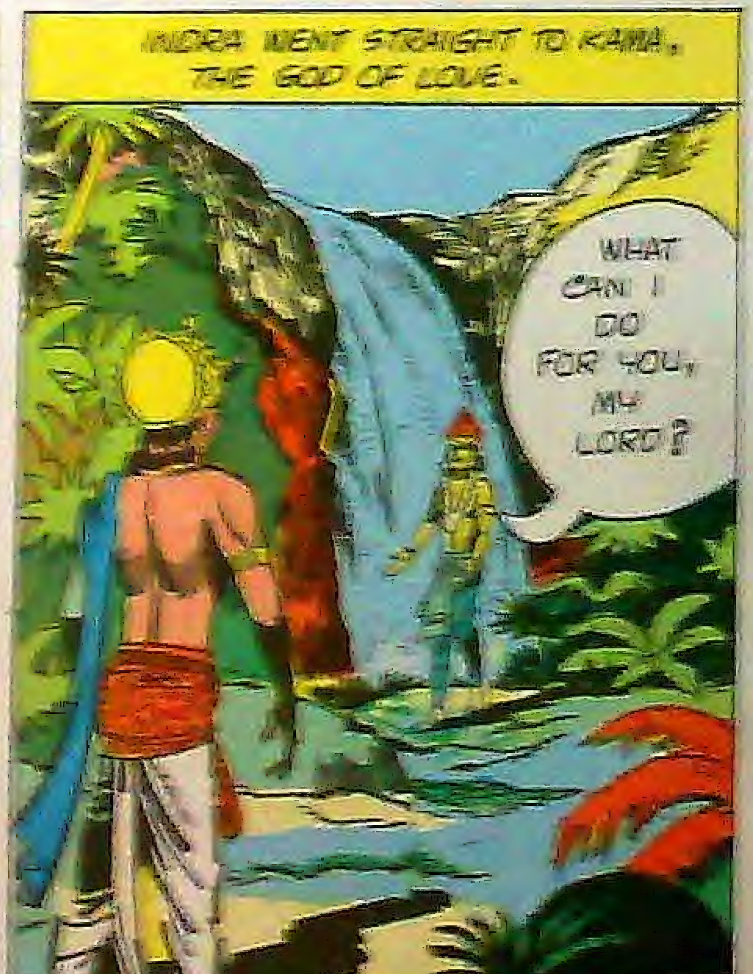

BRAHMA WAS HELPLESS.
DEAR SONS, MUCH AS I WANT TO HELP YOU, I CAN'T.


TARAKA HAS BECOME POWERFUL BY VIRTUE OF THE BOON I ONCE GRANTED HIM. SO I CANNOT DESTROY HIM.


BUT HE HAD A SOLUTION.
SHIVA IS DESTINED TO MARRY PARVATI.


GO! MAKE HIM AWARE OF HER BEAUTY.

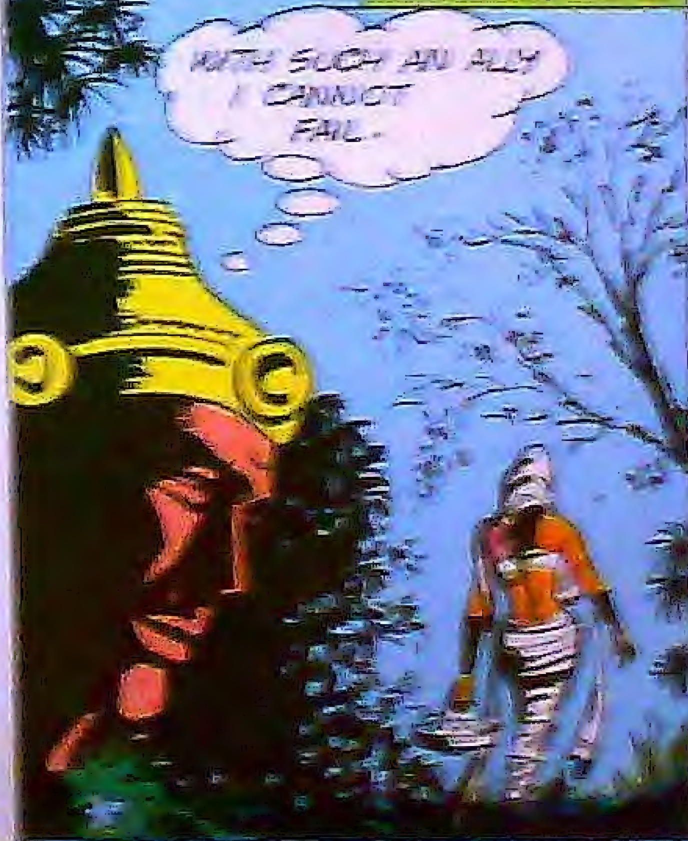

THEN BRAHMA PROMISED –
THE SON BORN AFTER THEIR WEDDING WILL BE YOUR WAR-LORD AND KILL TARAKA.


INDRA WENT STRAIGHT TO KAMA, THE GOD OF LOVE.
WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU, MY LORD?


I WANT YOU TO LURE SHIVA INTO MARRYING PARVATI.
IT SHALL BE DONE.


COME RATI, MY BELOVED WIFE AND SPRING, MY BOSOM COMPANION. LET US GO TO SHIVA'S GROVE.


BUT AS THEY APPROACHED SHIVA'S GROVE AND KAMA SAW THE MIGHTY SHIVA —
MY COURAGE FAILS ME!


AT THAT MOMENT PARVATI PASSED BY AND KAMA REGAINED COURAGE.
WITH SUCH AN ALLY I CANNOT FAIL.


PARVATI BOWED AND PLACED SOME FLOWERS BEFORE SHIVA, WHO HAD JUST COME OUT OF A DIVINE TRANCE.
MAY YOU BE BLESSED, SWEET MAID, WITH A HUSBAND WHO LOVES NONE BUT YOU.


SHIVA HAS SPOKEN AND HE CANNOT LIE. I AM SO HAPPY.


PARVATI WAS ABOUT TO PLACE A LOTUS GARLAND AROUND SHIVA'S NECK WHEN ...

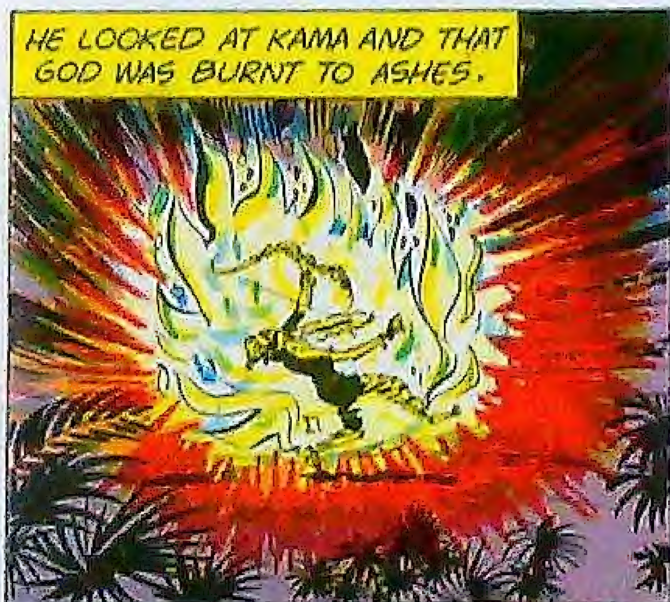

AH! THE TIME IS RIPE.


KAMA'S ARROW FOUND IT'S MARK.
WHAT A BEAUTIFUL CREATURE IS SHE WHO SERVES ME! WHY HAVE I NOT BEEN AWARE OF THIS?

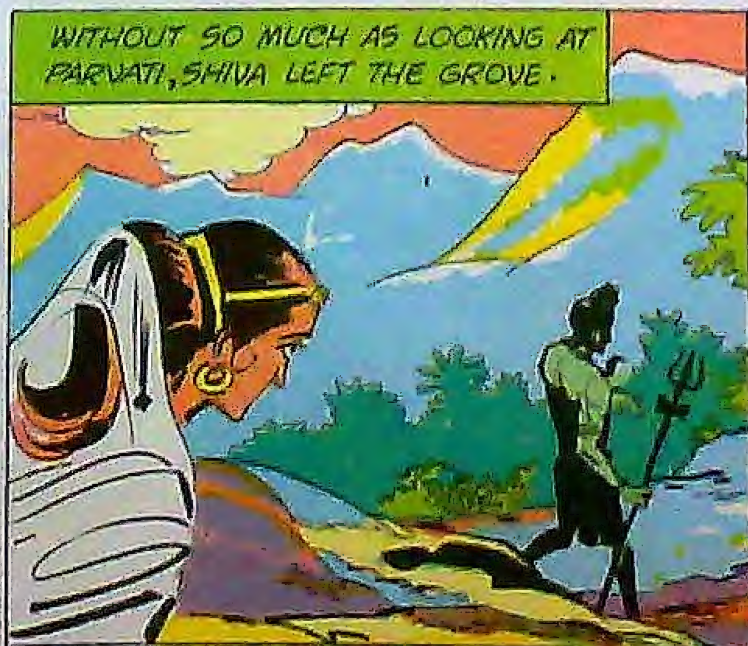

WHY DO I BLUSH WHEN THE LORD LOOKS AT ME? I FEEL STRANGE.


BUT WITH A GREAT EFFORT SHIVA BROUGHT HIS EMOTIONS UNDER CONTROL, AND LOOKED AROUND.
WHO HAS DARED DISTURB THE PEACE IN MY SOUL?


HE SAW KAMA AND ANGER FILLED HIS BEING.


HE LOOKED AT KAMA AND THAT GOD WAS BURNT TO ASHES.


ONE LOOK AT HIM AND RATI FAINTED.


WITHOUT SO MUCH AS LOOKING AT PARVATI, SHIVA LEFT THE GROVE.


PARVATI WAS OVERCOME WITH GRIEF AND SHAME.
NOT ONLY HAVE I LOVED IN VAIN BUT MY BELOVED HAS SPURNED ME BEFORE MY PLAYMATES!


HIMAVAT CAME AND PARVATI RAN TO HIM. HE HELD HER TENDERLY.
DEAR CHILD!
FATHER.


THEY MADE THEIR WAY HOMEWARD, SLOWLY AND SADLY.


IN THE MEANWHILE RATI WOKE UP FROM HER FAINT.
OF WHAT USE IS LIFE TO ME WHEN MY KAMA IS DEAD? IT WERE BETTER I TOO DIED AND JOINED HIM.


BUT A HEAVENLY VOICE STOPPED HER.
LIVE OH WIDOWED LADY. PARVATI WILL YET WIN SHIVA BY PENANCE, AND YOUR HUSBAND WILL BE RESTORED TO YOU ON THEIR WEDDING DAY.
RATI, CONSOLED AND CHEERED BY THE VOICE, LIVED AND WAITED FOR KAMA.

PARVATI WAS EXTREMELY PAINED BY SHIVA'S BEHAVIOUR BUT SHE CONTINUED TO LOVE HIM.

MY BEAUTY HAS FAILED TO MOVE HIM.

BUT I WILL NOT GIVE UP. SHIVA MAY NOT VALUE BEAUTY BUT PENANCE AND DEVOTION WILL CERTAINLY WIN HIM.

SHE TOLD HER MOTHER OF HER DECISION.

BUT WHY, MY CHILD? ARE THERE NO GODS TO LOVE YOU HERE? GIVE HIM UP.

MOTHER, YOU CANNOT UNDERSTAND. I HAVE DECIDED. PLEASE BLESS ME.

AND MENAKA SHAKING HER HEAD BLESSED PARVATI.

PARVATI THEN WENT TO HIMAVAT.

FATHER, GIVE ME YOUR CONSENT AND A GROVE THAT I MIGHT SPEND MY DAYS IN PENANCE AND PRAYER.

SO BE IT, MY BELOVED CHILD.


CASTING OFF HER FINE CLOTHES AND JEWELLERY, PARVATI ENTERED THE GROVE HER FATHER GAVE HER.


THE DEER IN THE GROVE LOVED HER.


SHE SLEPT ON THE COLD DAMP GROUND AND BARELY ATE ANYTHING.
DO YOU FAIL TO UNDERSTAND MY LOVE? I DON'T BELIEVE IT. PERHAPS YOU WISH TO TRY ME FURTHER.


AS SHE PERFORMED HER RITES, THE HERMITS NEARBY OFTEN CAME TO WATCH...
...AND MARVELLED.


GRADUALLY SHE GAVE UP EVEN THE LITTLE SHE ATE.
SHE HAS EATEN NOTHING SINCE WEEKS.
SHE IS *APARNA
* LADY OF THE UNBROKEN FAST.


I WILL SUBSIST ON YOUR NAME RESTING ON MY LIPS.


SHE SAT IN AN ICY POOL, HER LIPS QUIVERING, AND CONCENTRATED ON HER LORD.
TRULY SHE IS THE ASCETIC OF ASCETICS.
YOUR IMAGE FIXED IN MY HEART SHALL WARM ME.
MANY YEARS PASSED BUT PARVATI NEVER ONCE GAVE UP HOPE.


ONE DAY WHILE SHE WAS PERFORMING HER RITUALS BEFORE ENTERING THE POOL, A YOUNG HERMIT CAME TO SEE HER. PARVATI BOWED TO HIM.
?


HOW CAN YOUR TENDER FRAME CARRY OUT THE TASK YOUR SPIRIT HAS SET IT?


ALL HER AUSTERITY HAD ONLY ENHANCED PARVATI'S EXQUISITE BEAUTY.
TRULY YOU HAVE PROVED TO THE WORLD THAT BEAUTY AND PURITY NEED NOT DESTROY ONE ANOTHER.

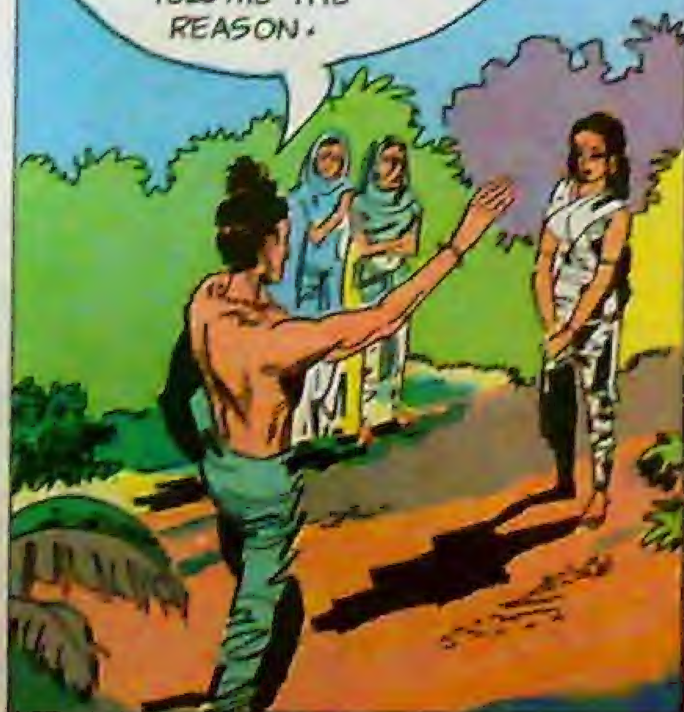

YOUR DEEDS HAVE CROWNED YOUR FATHER WITH AN EVEN GREATER GLORY THAN HE ALREADY OWNED.


NOBLE MAIDEN, WHY HAVE YOU UNDERTAKEN SUCH SEVERE PENANCE?


IT IS COMMON FOR A LONELY PERSON TORN BY GRIEF AND ANGUISH TO LIVE A HERMIT'S LIFE.


BUT WHY SHOULD YOU OH FAULTLESS ONE, LOVED AND CHERISHED BY ALL, DO SO ?
HEARING THIS PARVATI HEAVED A HEAVY SIGH.


AH ! IS IT BECAUSE OF UNREQUITED LOVE? NO, THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE. A PRICELESS GEM LIKE YOU IS SOUGHT AND DOES NOT SEEK.


GO HOME FAIR MAIDEN. I WILL GIVE YOU HALF THE MERITS I'VE EARNED IF YOU STOP THIS PENANCE. BUT PRAY TELL ME THE REASON.

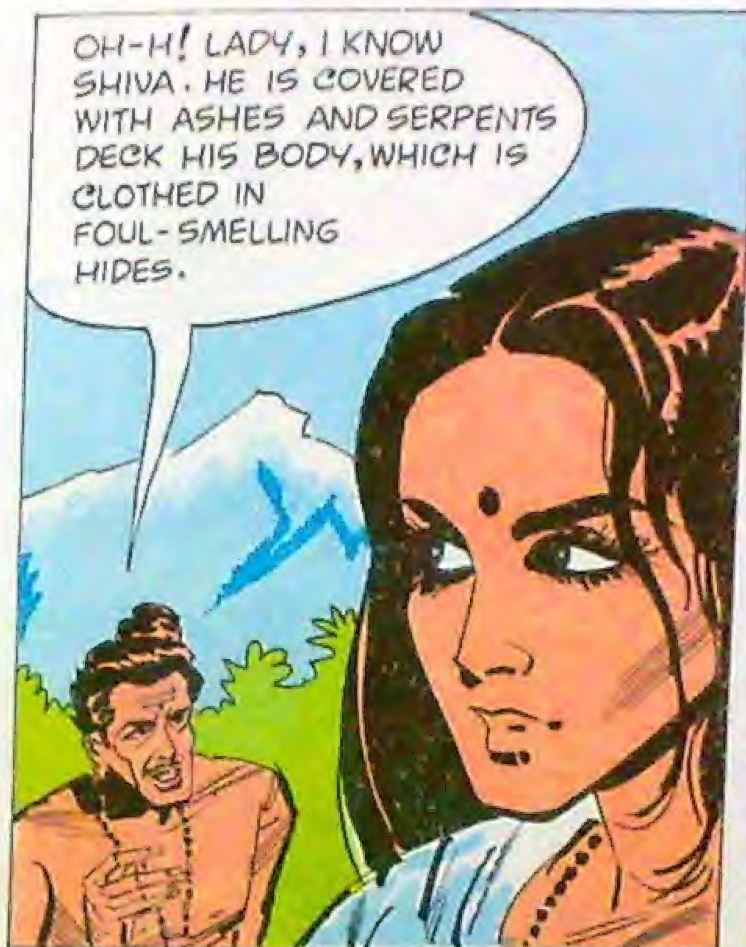

PARVATI TURNED TO HER FRIEND FOR HELP.

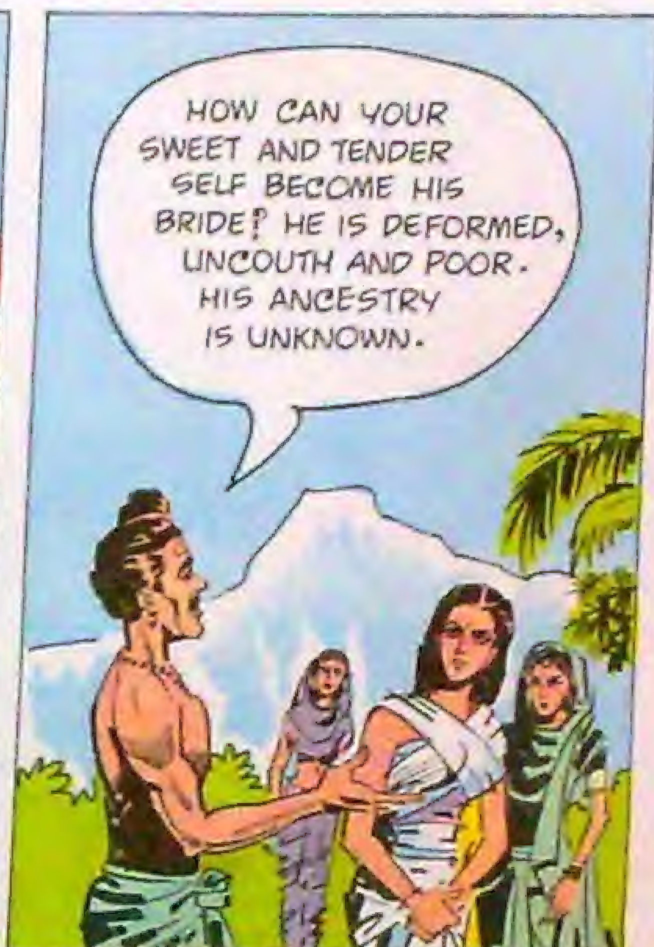

THE MAID TOLD ALL.
SHE HAD SET HER HEART ON WINNING SHIVA'S LOVE. SHE FAILED TO WIN HIM BY HER BEAUTY. SO SHE DECIDED TO DO IT BY PENANCE AND AUSTERITY.

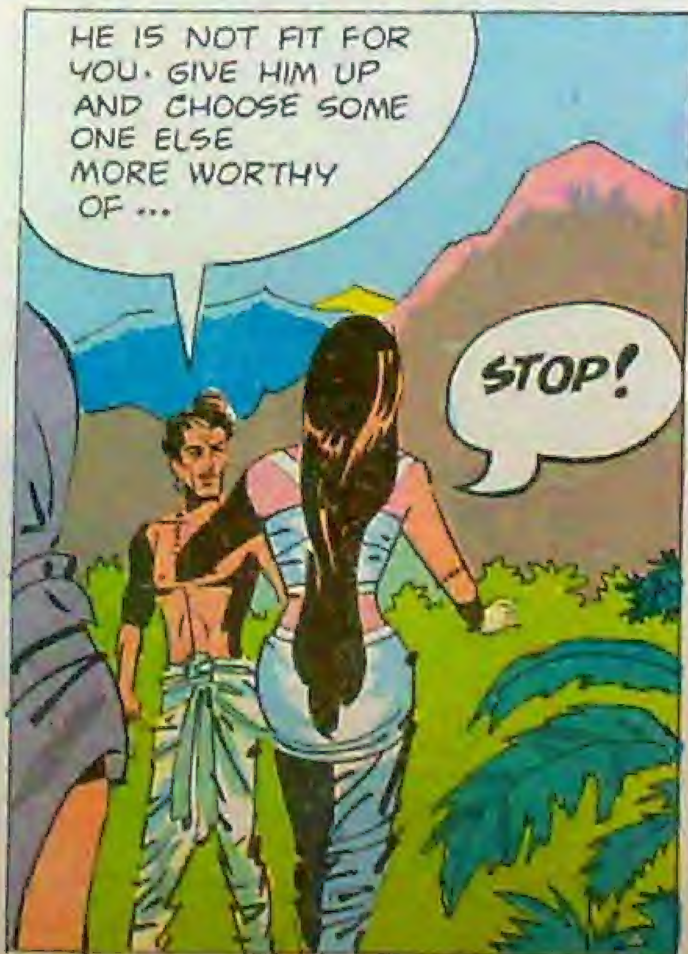

SHE OFTEN CRIES OUT TO HIM BUT SHIVA HAS REMAINED DEAF TO HER APPEALS.


THE HERMIT TURNED TO PARVATI.
IS THIS TRUE? OR IS YOUR FRIEND JOKING?


OH HOLY ONE, IT IS TRUE! I ADORE GREAT SHIVA. I AM SURE, I WILL WIN HIS LOVE BY MY PENANCE AND DEVOTION.


OH-H! LADY, I KNOW SHIVA. HE IS COVERED WITH ASHES AND SERPENTS DECK HIS BODY, WHICH IS CLOTHED IN FOUL-SMELLING HIDES.


HOW CAN YOUR SWEET AND TENDER SELF BECOME HIS BRIDE? HE IS DEFORMED, UNCOUTH AND POOR. HIS ANCESTRY IS UNKNOWN.


HE IS NOT FIT FOR YOU. GIVE HIM UP AND CHOOSE SOME ONE ELSE MORE WORTHY OF ...
STOP!


PARVATI COULD NO LONGER CONTROL HER ANGER.
IT TAKES A GREAT SOUL TO KNOW A GREAT SOUL.


LOW CREATURES CAN NEVER UNDERSTAND LOFTY MOTIVES. YOUR TONGUE GIVES AWAY YOUR EVIL MIND.

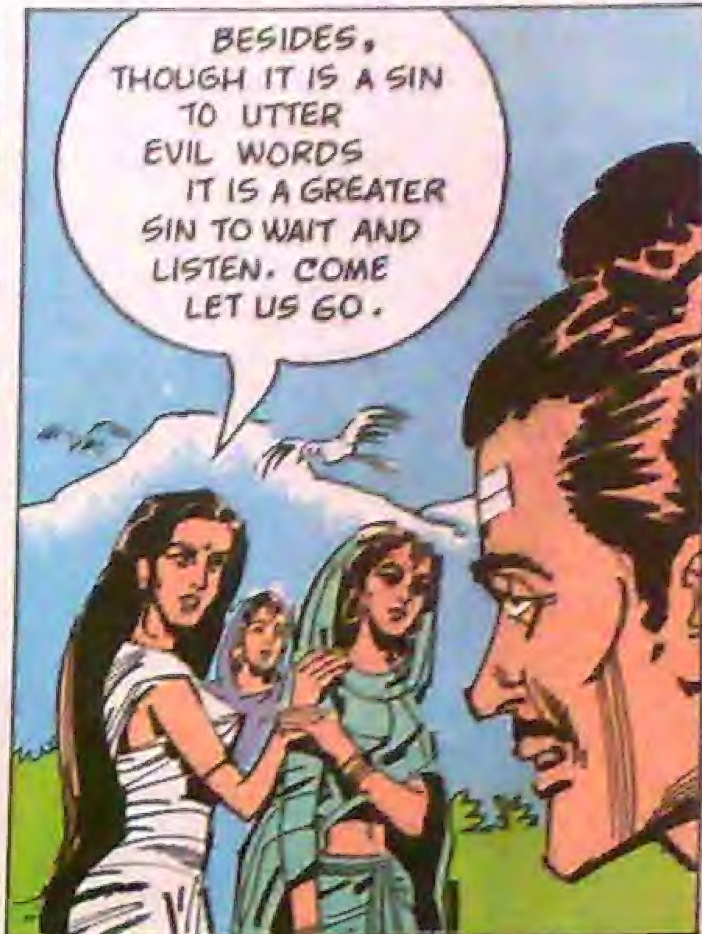

SHIVA NEITHER IMPRESSES NOR IS IMPRESSED BY OUTWARD APPEARANCES. HIS VALUES ARE DIFFERENT FROM YOURS.


WHAT IF HE IS UNCOUTH POOR AND ILL-CLAD? WHAT IF SERPENTS DECK HIS BODY? HE IS MY CHOSEN LORD.


HIS FAILINGS MAY BE MANY AND HIS VIRTUES FEW, BUT I LOVE HIM.

THEN PARVATI TURNED TO HER FRIEND WHO LISTENED IN AWE.



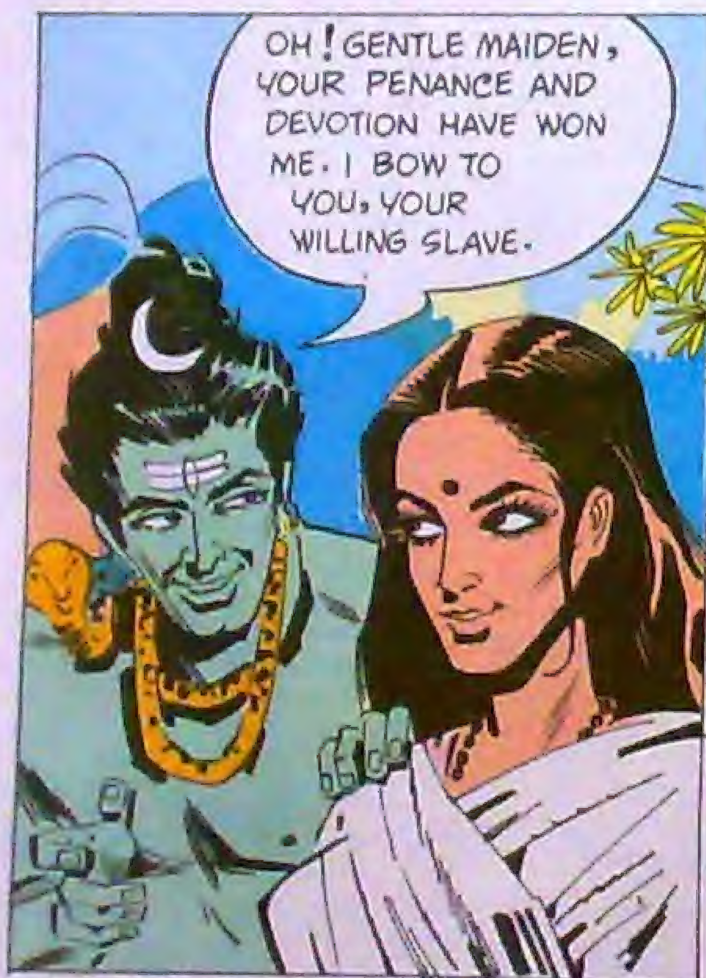




...THE HERMIT RUSHED FORWARD AND BLOCKED HER PATH.

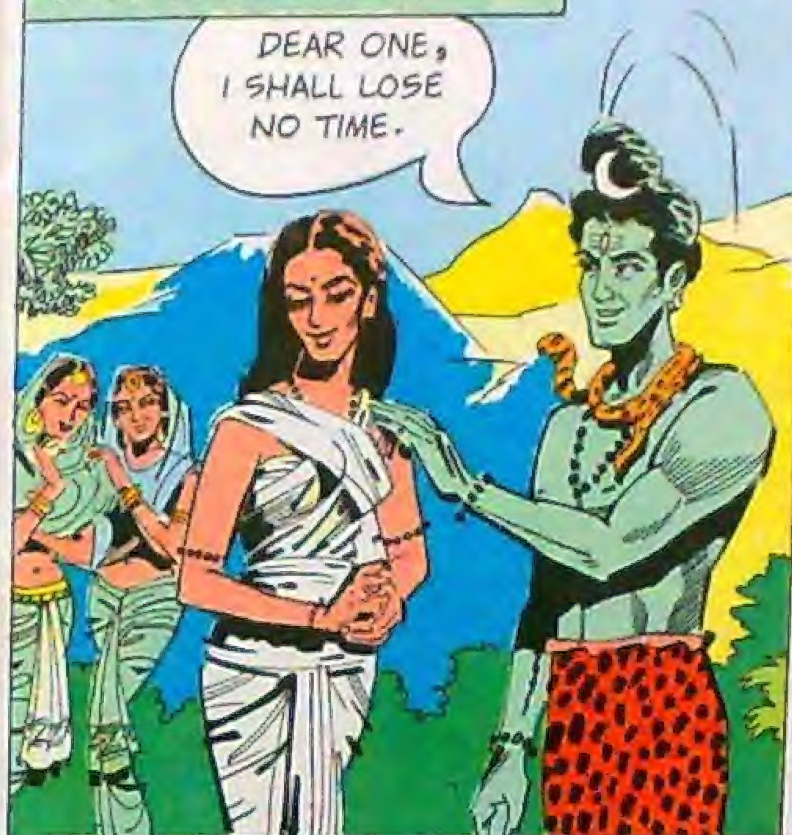


PARVATI WAS PARALYSED WITH SURPRISE. THE HERMIT WAS NONE OTHER THAN HER DEAR LORD, SHIVA.



BUT PARVATI, THE EVER DUTIFUL, LEFT SHIVA AND WENT TO HER FRIEND.

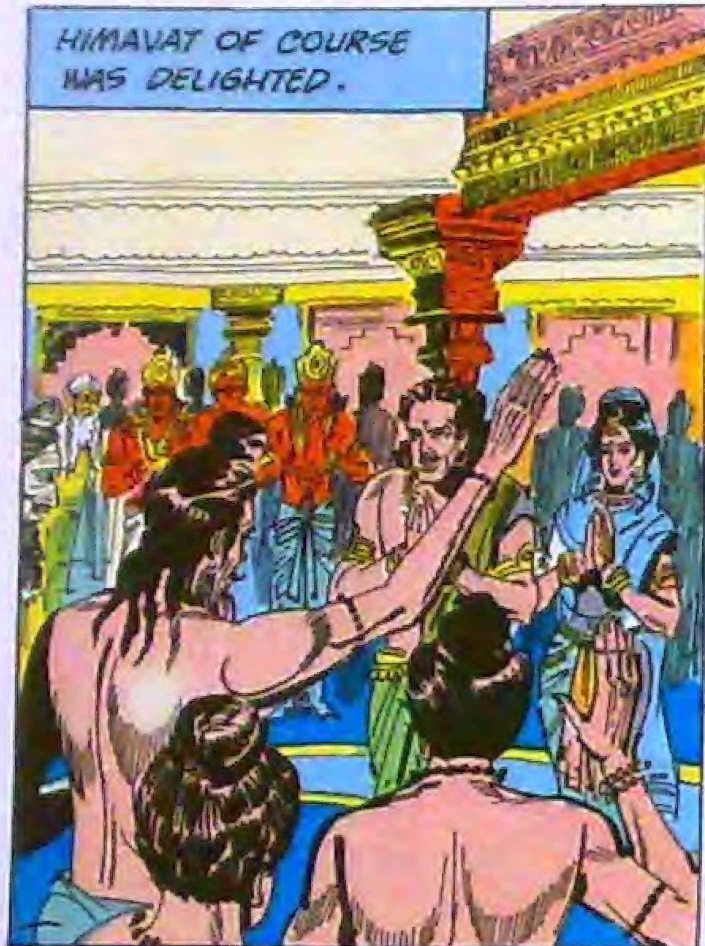


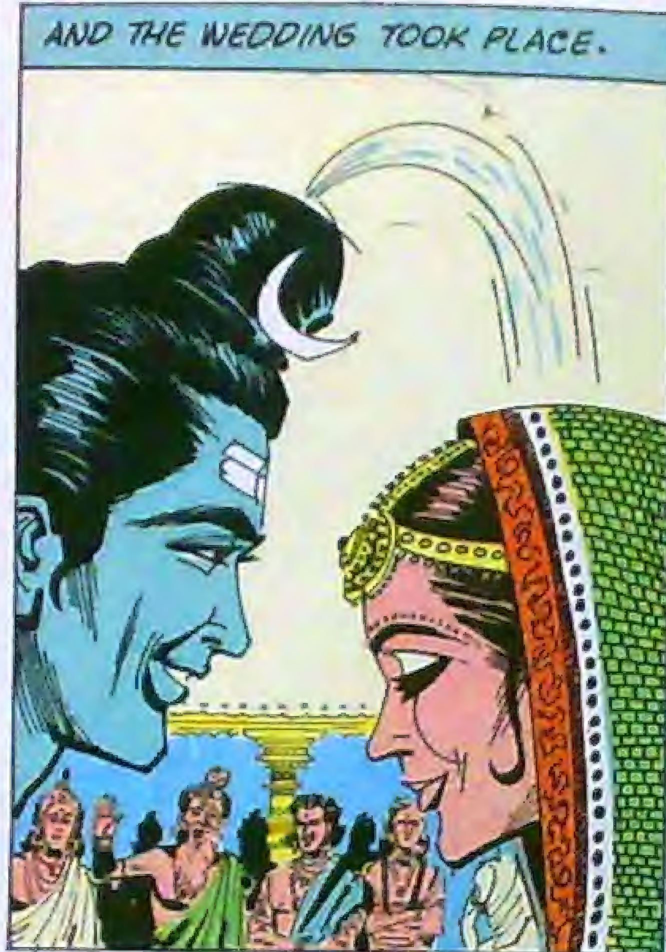

THE MAID DID SO AND PARVATI CAME BACK TO SHIVA.
DEAR ONE, I SHALL LOSE NO TIME.


THUS ASSURED, PARVATI WITH HER FRIEND TURNED HOMEWARD.


SHIVA CALLED FOR THE SEVEN RISHIS.
BRAHMA HAS PROMISED THE GODS THAT MY SON SHALL LEAD THEM AGAINST TARAKA.


TO FULFIL HIS PROMISE I WISH TO MARRY PARVATI. GO AND ASK HIMAVAT FOR HER HAND.





WHEN THE CEREMONY WAS OVER, THE GODS CAME TO SHIVA.

WE BEG YOU TO RESTORE KAMA TO RATI. FOR THE SAKE OF YOUR LOVELY BRIDE, HAVE PITY ON THE TENDER GOD AND HIS MOURNING WIFE.

I WILL. AM I NOT KAMA'S SLAVE TOO, NOW?


MANY YEARS PASSED AND SHIVA WAS LOST IN HIS LOVE FOR HIS WIFE.

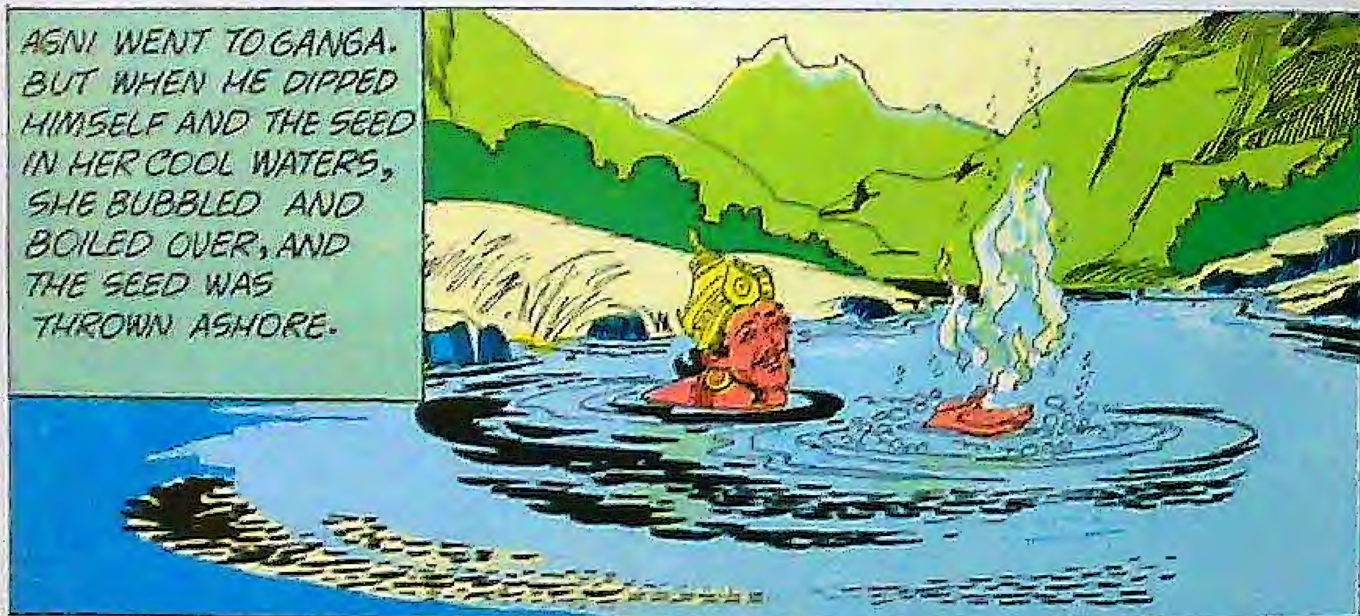

SO INDRA SENT AGNI TO SHIVA.
I HAVE COME TO REMIND YOU OF OUR NEED.


SHIVA GAVE AGNI A SEED IN HIS PALM.
WHEN THIS IS RIPE A CHILD WILL EMERGE HE SHALL BE YOUR WAR-LORD.


AGNI TOOK THE SEED BUT IT WAS SO HOT, HE COULD BARELY HOLD IT.
I MUST HASTEN TO INDRA.


BY THE TIME HE REACHED INDRA, HE BECAME PALE WITH DISCOMFORT.
I HAVE IT BUT I CAN NO LONGER BEAR IT.


INDRA FELT SORRY FOR HIM.
TAKE IT TO GANGA. SHE WILL COOL YOU AS WELL AS SUSTAIN IT.


AGNI WENT TO GANGA. BUT WHEN HE DIPPED HIMSELF AND THE SEED IN HER COOL WATERS, SHE BUBBLED AND BOILED OVER, AND THE SEED WAS THROWN ASHORE.


JUST THEN SIX CELESTIAL NYMPHS CAME TO BATHE IN THE GANGA.
WHAT IS THIS? A SEED?
LET US LAY IT IN A NEST OF SHARA GRASS.


THEY PICKED THE SEED AND PLACED IT NEAR SOME 'SHARA' GRASS.


THE SEED AT THAT MOMENT WAS RIPE AND KARTIKEYA EMERGED. THE CHILD GREW SIX FACES TO CHUCKLE AT EACH OF THE SIX NYMPHS WHO GAZED AT IT IN WONDER.
WE SHALL TAKE HIM WITH US. WE SAW HIM FIRST.


JUST THEN GANGA CAME OUT IN THE FORM OF A WOMAN AND AGNI TOO APPEARED.
I'WILL TAKE HIM. I BORE HIM.
NO! HE IS PROMISED TO US.


AT THAT MOMENT SHIVA AND PARVATI REACHED THE SCENE. SHIVA SETTLED THE MATTER.
WHO ELSE BUT PARVATI IS THE FIT ONE TO BRING UP A CHILD DESTINED TO LEAD THE GODS?


PARVATI PICKED THE CHILD UP TENDERLY AND CLASPED IT TO HER.
AND LED BY SHIVA RETURNED TO MOUNT KAILAS.

IN TIME KARTIKEYA GROW UP AND LED THE GODS IN A FIERCE BATTLE AGAINST THE EVIL TARAKA AND SLEW HIM.

INDRA WAS RESTORED TO THE THRONE, AND HAPPINESS REIGNED ONCE MORE IN HEAVEN.

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